

SSI SPECIAL REPORT

**BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE:  
THE UNITED STATES, MEXICO,  
AND THE AGONY OF NATIONAL SECURITY**

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## FOREWORD

Few countries are as important to U.S. national security as Mexico. Yet, surprisingly little has been written about the complex of issues that make up the U.S.-Mexican national security matrix. In part, this is because we have long taken our southern neighbor for granted. Today, however, this is no longer possible. Mexico is the birthplace of a rapidly growing segment of U.S. society. The North American Free Trade Association has accelerated its interdependence with the U.S. economy. At the same time, Mexico has been experiencing great political, economic, and social disruption, and has become the territory of origin or transit of most of the illegal drugs entering the United States. The growing interpenetration and interdependence of the two countries means that this turmoil is more likely than ever to spill over the border. Whether in the form of economic interaction, illegal immigration, or the spread of corruption and violence, what happens in Mexico increasingly affects our own national interests. By redefining U.S.-Mexican national security in nontraditional terms, Dr. Donald E. Schulz has gone a long way towards helping us comprehend the implications of what has been happening. Equally important, he offers practical suggestions as to how U.S. leaders should respond--and not respond--to these challenges.

The Strategic Studies Institute is pleased to publish this report as a contribution to understanding events in this critical North American neighbor.

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### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR

DONALD E. SCHULZ is a Professor of National Security Affairs at the Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College. He is coauthor of *Reconciling the Irreconcilable: The Troubled Outlook for U.S. Policy Toward Haiti and The United States, Honduras and the Crisis in Central America*, and coeditor of *Mexico Faces the 21st Century, Revolution and Counterrevolution in Central America and the Caribbean, Cuba and the Future and Political Participation in Communist Systems*. His articles have appeared in *Foreign Policy*, *Orbis*, the *Journal of Interamerican Studies* and *World Affairs*, and *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, as well as such media outlets as *Newsweek*, *The Washington Post*, the *Miami Herald*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the *Christian Science Monitor*.

## SUMMARY

This study analyses the changing nature of U.S.-Mexican national security issues, with a focus on narcotrafficking, the growing militarization of Mexico's counterdrug and police institutions, the danger of spreading guerrilla war, and the prospects of political and economic instability. The conclusion is that Mexico is in the midst of an extended period of transition in which it is extremely vulnerable to disruption on several different fronts simultaneously. While the economy has largely recovered from the 1994-95 peso crisis, it remains both fragile and volatile. Although much progress has been achieved in democratization, there is still a long way to go. Both political and criminal violence are growing. A new guerrilla group has appeared which may prove to be more troublesome than the Zapatistas. At the same time, the drug cartels are increasingly targeting law enforcement officers for assassination.

In response to this growing lawlessness, the Mexican government has turned to the military for support in the struggles against narcotrafficking, insurgency, and common crime. Law enforcement is being increasingly militarized. While the immediate benefits of the strategy make it tempting, the costs and risks are considerable, especially as they relate to the growing vulnerability of the armed forces to corruption, the increased likelihood of human rights violations, and the potential for undermining Mexican democracy. Unless a major long-term effort is made to foster police and judicial reform, militarization may turn out to be a semipermanent feature of the emerging new political system.

Within this context, the author argues that the United States should provide, and encourage other governments to provide, Mexico with the assistance it needs to strengthen civilian institutions and gradually reverse the militarization process. Meanwhile, care should be taken to make sure that U.S. counternarcotics aid is used for the purposes intended. When human rights violations, electoral fraud, or other abuses occur, the United States should forcefully exert its influence, but primarily through private diplomacy rather than public demonstrations like the annual certification ritual. Indeed, the author suggests that certification has become counterproductive and should be abolished.

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A politician who is poor is a poor politician.

Carlos Hank Gonzalez  
Cabinet member during the Salinas Administration<sup>1</sup>

Since I was 17, I have been in military schools where they have hammered us with values such as honesty, discipline, and loyalty to the fatherland. These values make us more resistant to corruption [than civilians].

General Jesus Gutierrez Rebollo  
Director, National Institute to Combat Drugs  
(December 1996-February 1997)<sup>2</sup>

Over the past several years, a major shift has occurred in the panorama of U.S.-Mexican national security concerns. In the process, Mexico, a country that had enjoyed extraordinary political and socio-economic stability for most of the preceding half-century, has become dangerously unstable. Yet, few of the sources of this instability can be traced to traditional national security threats. While there was a time when one could view national security in narrow military terms, that era has now passed, both for Mexico and the United States.<sup>3</sup> The question is whether nonmilitary solutions can be found for these problems, or whether, failing that, a strategy of militarization will be adopted, and, if so, with what consequences.

**The Scourge of Narcopolitics.**

Arguably, the most serious threat to Mexican national security today is narcotrafficking.<sup>4</sup> The reason is not hard to discern: The cartels have so penetrated the Mexican state and socio-economic structure that they have effectively subverted the country's institutions. You name the institution, and it has to one extent or another been corrupted: Congress, the courts, state governors, banks, businesses, the military, the police. The Federal Judicial Police have been so corrupted that it is no longer possible to make clear-cut distinctions between them and the criminals they are supposed to apprehend. In Mexico, the police very often are the crooks, and they have been deeply involved in narcotrafficking.<sup>5</sup> Even the presidency has been touched, at least indirectly. There have been cabinet members who have had connections with the cartels. A former member of President Zedillo's and ex-President Salinas' security detail has admitted having been an operative for the Tijuana Cartel. Salinas' brother, Raul, almost certainly had ties with the Gulf of Mexico Cartel, and possibly with the Tijuana Cartel as well.<sup>6</sup>

In short, we are not simply talking about a comparative

handful of crooked politicians or gangsters. Drugs are the country's major export crop. In 1994, Mexico earned at least \$7 billion and perhaps as much as \$30 billion from narcotics.<sup>7</sup> The same year, the largest legal export--oil--earned only \$7 billion, and all legal exports combined amounted to less than \$61 billion. And while much of this money is invested abroad, much also is returned to Mexico where it is recycled into businesses, both legitimate and illegitimate. By investing in privatized state companies, ports, tourism, construction, hotels, restaurants, exchange houses, banks, and innumerable other enterprises, Mexico's *narcos* "are able to both launder their profits and masquerade as respectable entrepreneurs."<sup>8</sup>

Mexico has become hooked on drug money. And that raises an important question: Given the extent of its addiction, can it stand a withdrawal? If the Zedillo administration were to succeed in eliminating--or, more realistically, sharply reducing--drug trafficking, what would be the impact on the economy? Mexico is currently in the process of recovering from a deep recession; the economy is still very fragile. Can the government take the chance of disrupting the recovery by really going after the drug lords? And if it did, what would be the social and political implications (the impact on unemployment and social unrest, for instance)? It is significant that U.S. officials have been very hesitant to slap stringent economic sanctions on the traffickers--in no small part out of fear of the damage that could be done to the Mexican economy.<sup>9</sup>

The pain of withdrawal would be considerable in another way as well. For some time now, Mexicans have been debating whether or not a process of "Colombianization" was underway in their country. By Colombianization, of course, I am referring to a state of all-out war between the government and the cartels, similar to that which occurred in Colombia in the early 1990s, when the government went after (and eventually got) Pablo Escobar and the Medellin Cartel. So far, that has not happened in Mexico. It has not happened because the government has not waged war against the cartels the way the Colombian government did, and so there has been no massive retaliation or massive bloodshed.

There have, however, been some troubling recent developments. For some time, the United States has been pressing Mexico to take a stronger stand against the cartels, and President Zedillo has accordingly agreed to do this.<sup>10</sup> In early 1996, the government arrested the head of the Gulf of Mexico Cartel, Juan Garcia Abrego, and turned him over to U.S. authorities. Not long thereafter, it began going after the Arellano Felix brothers in Tijuana. An aggressive federal commander, Ernesto Ibarra Santes, was appointed head of a special mobile intelligence unit, which swept through the area confiscating properties and arresting associates of the Tijuana Cartel. In August, as part of a nationwide purge of the Federal Judicial Police, about a quarter of the *Federales* in Baja California were dismissed. Ibarra was appointed commander of the

federal police there. One month later, he received a call from then Attorney General Antonio Lozano, ordering him to report to Mexico City. When he arrived, no security detail was there to escort him so he left the airport in a cab. A few minutes later, a car pulled alongside, and gunmen sprayed the taxi with automatic weapons fire, killing Ibarra, two bodyguards, and the driver.<sup>11</sup>

This was not an isolated assassination. During this period, eight counternarcotics officials or former officials based in Tijuana were killed in a little over a year, along with more than a dozen state and municipal police and scores of minor traffickers. Altogether, in the year ending in October 1996 some 200 Mexican officers were killed in drug-related violence.<sup>12</sup>

One does not have to be a rocket scientist to figure out what has been happening. There is a cause and effect relationship. If you go after the cartels, they will come after you. And I will go even farther than that: If you go after the corrupt police who are linked to the cartels, they will retaliate also. The fact that the assassins knew the details of Ibarra's travel plans suggests they were acting on inside information.<sup>13</sup>

Beyond this, there is another problem. Since coming to office, the Zedillo administration has made a serious attempt to revamp the police. In 1996 alone, some 1,200 police officials were dismissed. Over the past couple of years, the Federal Judicial Police (PJF) have been purged and over a third of the force fired.<sup>14</sup> Meanwhile, the military has been increasingly brought into the law enforcement business. In late 1995, the armed forces took over the top command of the *Federales* in Chihuahua, bringing in active duty and former officers in a "test case" for a pilot project to incorporate personnel with military training into the PJF.<sup>15</sup> Since then, generals have been placed in command positions in at least 19 state civilian police agencies and the federal district.<sup>16</sup> Ninety-five federal police and drug enforcement agents in Baja California have recently been replaced by soldiers. Over 100 military personnel have been incorporated into the federal attorney general's office in Chihuahua, and others are performing similar functions in Tamaulipas. In Nuevo Leon, the entire contingent of 50 PJF agents has been replaced by twice as many soldiers. Increasingly, mid-level local commanders are meeting with police and judicial officials to formulate public security strategies.<sup>17</sup>

In December 1996, moreover, generals were placed in charge of the Federal Judicial Police, the National Institute to Combat Drugs (INCD, the Mexican equivalent of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration), and the Center for the Planning of Drug Control (CENDRO).<sup>18</sup> Reportedly, the mid-level officers and the operational command units that will support them will also come from the armed forces.<sup>19</sup> At the same time, the Center for National Security and Investigation (CISEN), the government's secret information service, has increasingly been taken over by

the military.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, since June 1996 there has been a sweeping shake-up of the police in Mexico City. The new head of that force, retired Brigadier General Enrique Salgado Cordero, has brought in nearly 200 military officers to oversee the department. Some 2,600 police are to be replaced by soldiers charged with patrolling the streets and combating crime. In the Federal District and elsewhere, troops have been repeatedly used to locate and help apprehend drug traffickers. In Tijuana, military officers have been placed in charge of the federal prosecutor's local office and the special police border unit monitoring immigration; the director of the state police is a military man, as is the chief of security at the city's international airport. As a result of these and other measures, some 70 percent of the narcotics confiscated in Mexico in 1996 was found by the armed forces.<sup>21</sup>

All of this, of course, is being done for a reason: Not only are the cartels more powerful than ever, but violent crime has been skyrocketing. There were some 1,500 kidnappings in Mexico in 1995, more than in any other Latin American country except Colombia (which leads the world in that dubious honor). Last year, about 30 percent of Mexico's commercial establishments were held up. Some of this, at least, is attributable to the police or former police, who are putting their skills to use in new and creative ways. (By 1995, according to an internal Mexican Interior Ministry report, there were some 900 armed criminal gangs in Mexico, over half of which were composed of current or former law enforcement officials.)<sup>22</sup>

Now, much of this crime is due to other factors also. The socio-economic crisis that began in December 1994 has driven a lot of people over the line, and they are doing whatever they have to do to survive. A lot of it is illegal, and some of it is violent. At the same time, drug traffickers and guerrillas have increased their involvement in the kidnapping business. The point is simply that efforts to cure the diseases of drug trafficking and corruption will be painful. Indeed, in the short run they may be as painful as the diseases themselves, which is one reason why the government has been so reluctant to push the matter. Again, the danger is that a dialectic of violence may occur, which could potentially take Mexico down the road to full-scale "Colombianization." If that happened, even the president of the republic would not be safe.

Why is all this of interest to the United States? The answer is fairly obvious. In recent years, some 50-70 percent of the cocaine, up to 80 percent of the marijuana, and 20-30 percent of the heroin imported into the United States has come from or through Mexico.<sup>23</sup> And add to this a newcomer: methamphetamines. "Speed" is enjoying a dramatic surge in popularity in the United States. Indeed, it is not too much to suggest that a major shift is occurring in the international drug trade. Over the next decade, there is likely to be a marked decline in U.S. consumption of cocaine. Tastes are changing, and synthetic drugs



will at least partially push it out of the market. And here the Mexicans--especially the Guadalajara cartel run by the brothers Jesus and Luis Amezcua--have gotten in on the ground floor. They control about 80 percent of the U.S. market for methamphetamines, operate labs and distribution systems deep inside the United States, and have a vast network of foreign suppliers that stretches around the world.<sup>24</sup> Finally, Mexico has become one the most important money laundering centers in the Americas.

Drugs are a national security issue for the United States. Indeed, they may well be the most important U.S. national security interest in this hemisphere. They are poisoning our society, destroying the social fabric, and spreading crime, violence, and death. Mexican drug organizations already operate deep inside the United States, and there is mounting evidence of their corrupting effect on U.S. federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies all along the Rio Grande. Should drug violence in Mexico escalate, we will not be immune. It will spread over the border. Indeed, it already has.

This again raises the issue of the cure and the disease. I have already asked whether Mexico can stand the pain of a withdrawal from its addiction. The question might equally be posed of the United States. Given the impact that a major drug war would have on the Mexican economy and its potential for social and political destabilization, including an increase in illegal migration across the border, can the United States really afford such a policy? I do not pretend to have the answer. I would merely suggest that this is an issue that needs to be fully thought out.

### **The Spread of Guerrilla Violence.**

Another major national security issue that needs to be addressed is the spread of guerrilla war. Some time ago, this writer raised the issue of whether there were other groups besides the Zapatistas (EZLN) that might pose a national security threat to Mexico. In particular, I mentioned a group calling itself the Clandestine Revolutionary Workers Party-Union of the People-Party of the Poor, or PROCUP-PDLP. And I further stated that if another guerrilla war did break out, it would most likely begin in Guerrero.<sup>25</sup> Since then, of course, a new insurgency has flared up, initially in Guerrero but quickly spreading to Oaxaca and several other states. A new rebel organization, the Revolutionary People's Army (EPR), has appeared, composed of 14 tiny leftist factions, including PROCUP-PDLP.

Very little is known about the EPR, but what is known is disturbing. These are, in the words of one scholar, the "cavemen of the left."<sup>26</sup> The movement's patriarch appears to be Felipe Martínez Soriano, a former rector at the Oaxaca Benito Juárez Autonomous University, who has been imprisoned since 1990 for his involvement in the killing of two La Jornada security guards in

Mexico City. Over the years, Martinez Soriano and PROCUP-PDLP (which was founded in 1979, but whose roots go back to 1964 and the small revolutionary cells that flourished during that decade) have gained a reputation for fanaticism and violence that makes the Zapatistas look like choirboys. Until recently, at least, the rebels were unabashedly Marxist-Leninist and Maoist and advocated a strategy of Prolonged Popular War. Other groups in the radical left tended to view them as "crazies." They have been known to execute their own people for "ideological deviations" and wage war against other, less extreme, leftist organizations.<sup>27</sup>

How much popular support the group has is hard to say. My guess is not very much. However, it is certainly well-financed. The insurgents appear to get much of their money from kidnappings, bank robberies, and possibly drug trafficking. The Mexican government believes they were responsible for the kidnapping of billionaire Alfredo Harp Helu in 1994, for which they are reported to have received \$30 million.<sup>28</sup> They are well-armed and give the impression of being highly organized and disciplined (as one would expect of groups which have led an underground existence for over two decades).<sup>29</sup> They have some ability to launch coordinated military attacks, and are not geographically limited to any one region of the country. They can pop up from safe houses in Mexico City as well as the poverty-stricken rural areas of southern Mexico. This gives them a considerable ability to appear and disappear at will, which means they can fight at times and places of their own choosing.

All this makes the EPR hard to defend against and even harder to wipe out. Thus, one can expect continued sporadic guerrilla attacks, bombings, kidnappings, and other acts of terrorism. Does the group have the capacity to win widespread popular support? Probably not. Its very extremism works against its acquiring a mass following. This being said, however, it clearly does have some backing. It would be impossible for it to operate in and around the Federal District without some social base. In January 1996, moreover, a nationwide coalition of scores of leftist groups was formed, including radical peasant and teachers unions. This movement, which calls itself the Broad Front for the Construction of a National Liberation Movement (FAC-MLN), provides considerable networking potential for the guerrillas. The EPR has shown some signs of moderating its tactics and rhetoric in order to broaden its appeal through a campaign of "armed propaganda."<sup>30</sup> Part of this apparently included a decision not to try to disrupt the July 1997 elections. Recently, however, the EPR has resumed its attacks, claiming that the government was pursuing a torture campaign against it.<sup>31</sup>

Beyond this, there is a lot of discontent in the countryside. Agrarian unrest has mounted in recent years and will probably continue to increase, in large part because of the government's own actions: Its agricultural modernization program--including the revision of Article 27 of the Constitution (in

effect ending the agrarian reform), the NAFTA, the elimination of quotas, tariffs, subsidies, credits and so on--will add fuel to what are still scattered bonfires. For their part, the Zapatistas, though contained militarily, have provided inspiration for tens of thousands of peasants, some of whom have already begun to seize lands for themselves. Some of the new guerrilla groups--and there are other small organizations out there besides the EPR and the EZLN<sup>32</sup>--are clearly trying to emulate the better known movements. Whether these fires will grow larger and spread, how far and how fast, is impossible to say, but it would be foolish to pretend there is no problem. (An additional complicating factor lies in the potential linkages between some of these groups and the drug cartels. There has been speculation that the EPR could be getting some of its arms and funding from narcotraffickers. While there is no hard evidence of this to date, one cannot dismiss the possibility that some of these groups might develop into narcoguerrilla organizations a la Colombia.)

Along these same lines, if guerrilla violence does spread, it will probably be partially because the Mexican military and police mishandle their counterinsurgency responsibilities. There is a danger that these forces will engage in large-scale human rights abuses or encourage local vigilante groups in such activities (indeed, there has already been some of this),<sup>33</sup> and that this will have the effect of pushing significant numbers of campesinos into the arms of the guerrillas. This is a classic syndrome. One could see it very clearly in the formative years of the Salvadoran and Guatemalan guerrilla movements in the late 1970s/early 1980s,<sup>34</sup> and there is a chance it could occur in Mexico, too. President Zedillo, for one, is aware of the trap and has promised not to fall into it,<sup>35</sup> but whether he can control the military, the police, and various violence-prone local forces remains to be seen.

### **The Socio-economic Crisis.**

Another major national security issue that must be at least briefly mentioned is the socio-economic situation. Nineteen ninety-five was a year of crisis: 30,000 businesses went bankrupt, at least a million people (and probably many more) were thrown out of work, interest rates soared to 140 percent, inflation hit 52 percent, the economy contracted by 6.6 percent, and the value of the peso shrank to about 12.8 cents.<sup>36</sup> More recently, however, things have been looking up. The country is no longer in a recession. Indeed, the growth rate during the last three-quarters of 1996 was nothing short of explosive. Investors are once again rushing to lend money, with the result that in January 1997 President Zedillo was able to announce that Mexico had paid back all of the \$12.5 billion loan it had borrowed from the United States with interest, 3 years ahead of schedule. All in all, the U.N. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean estimates that the economy increased by about 4.5

percent in 1996, and most observers expect comparable growth this year.<sup>37</sup>

This may well happen, but a note of caution is advisable. During the past two decades, Mexico has experienced a series of economic crises (1976, 1982-83, 1986-88, and December 1994-early 1996), and it is premature to conclude that it has broken out of this syndrome. Not all of the current indicators are positive, and some are even illusory. The Mexican recovery, after all, has in substantial part been the product of external forces--in particular, the international bailout which sent a forceful message to investors that the United States and the international financial community would not let the country go down the drain. In the short run, the sharp devaluation of the peso has enabled Mexico to turn around its balance of payments deficit. Imports and exports are now roughly in balance. The question is whether they will stay that way as the economic recovery strengthens the country's capacity to import foreign products. If they do not, then there could very well be trouble down the road.

By the same token, the early repayment of the U.S. loan was less an indication of a sustainable economic recovery than of simple good business sense. All the Zedillo administration really did was borrow money on the European bond market at lower rates and send it to the U.S. Treasury. At the same time, the recovery has been largely restricted to the export sector. The domestic economy, which employs more than 80 percent of the job-holding population, remains generally stagnant.<sup>38</sup> Similarly, growth has yet to spread from the industrialized north to the rural south. Even if it eventually does--and it may not--the recovery there is likely to lag far behind that in the more prosperous north. Thus, potentially explosive regional economic disparities will continue to grow.

If I had to sum up the Mexican economy in two words, they would be "fragility" and "volatility." In recent years, the economy has resembled a rollercoaster, rising and falling for reasons that are sometimes very superficial or ephemeral. The December 1994 peso crisis, for instance, was sparked by a Zapatista "offensive" that turned out to be nothing more than guerrilla theater.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, there are factors at work that are beyond Mexican control. Had the Clinton administration decided to decertify Mexico with respect to the war on drugs, the impact on the economy might well have been traumatic.<sup>40</sup> Similarly, if U.S. interest rates should rise sharply, investors will be tempted to place their money in Miami or New York rather than Mexico.<sup>41</sup> And should the United States sink into a recession, the impact would be substantial. (Among other things, it would affect the U.S. capacity to import Mexican goods.) This is part of the dark side--rarely discussed--of the growing interdependence of the two economies.

The Mexican stock market and peso still have not completely stabilized. There were some shaky weeks last autumn (1996),<sup>42</sup> and

this February the peso, buffeted by uncertainty as to whether President Clinton would recertify Mexico, suffered its largest 1-day drop in over a year, falling to 8-to-the-dollar. (It is currently at 7.9 to the dollar.) Some economic analysts believe that the government will have to devalue again after the July 1997 elections. This issue scares a lot of people who remember what happened in 1994. These analysts have argued that Zedillo should have dealt with the problem earlier, but did not for political reasons.<sup>43</sup> The administration faces a tough election and has not been willing to do anything (like substantially lowering the value of the peso) that would hurt its chances. That raises the question of whether history is about to repeat itself. President Salinas, it will be recalled, also postponed dealing with an overvalued peso before the August 1994 elections, only to have the economy collapse a few months later.

Will that happen again? Probably not. The best guess is that if there is an economic downturn, it will not be the kind of cataclysmic disaster it was last time. Some of the key variables are different: Under the structural reforms instituted after the last crisis, the Central Bank has adopted a "free-float" strategy, with the value of the peso largely being determined by the markets.<sup>44</sup> By the same token, Mexico today is not facing an imminent balance of payments crisis, with major short-term loans coming due and no money to pay them. On the other hand, the value of the peso has not depreciated in accordance with continuing high rates of inflation (about 27 percent in 1996), and that may indeed mean that the currency has become overvalued. Some analysts predict it will slip to between 8.5 and 9 pesos to the dollar by the end of the year.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, Mexico still owes billions to the International Monetary Fund and is expected to borrow more this year.<sup>46</sup> The total foreign debt, incidentally, is now over \$180 billion, which is a higher percentage of the economy than in 1982 when Mexico's inability to meet its payments triggered the Latin American debt crisis.<sup>47</sup>

Besides these economic variables, of course, there is growing narcoterrorism and a new guerrilla group to worry about--not to mention the increasing uncertainty surrounding the country's electoral future. Investors don't like instability and unpredictability. If the political crisis worsens--if there is an upsurge in assassinations, guerrilla violence, and political turmoil (if, for instance, elements opposed to the current economic reforms come to power)--it may well have an impact on the health of the economy. Everything is connected to everything else. A continuing political crisis would make a sustained economic recovery more difficult, and, if the recovery cannot be sustained, that, in turn, will prolong the political turmoil.

### **The Continuing Political Crisis.**

Will there be more political instability, scandals, and violence? In a word, yes. Not only is there a growing threat of

narcoterrorism and guerrilla attacks, but the political power struggle within the governing *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI) has not yet been resolved, and some of these elements can be very violent. After all, there is a lot of power and money at stake. At the same time, the struggle between the PRI and the opposition is only going to intensify. Moves by the former to circumscribe electoral reforms were probably a harbinger of things to come.

In November 1996, after nearly 2 years of negotiations with the opposition which produced over a dozen agreements, the PRI broke off talks and used its legislative majority to impose its own more limited measures. Among other things, the ruling party will retain a marked advantage in state funding, there will be a higher ceiling on private contributions to campaign funds, spending violations will be decriminalized, and there will be restrictions on the opposition's ability to unite behind "common" candidates.<sup>48</sup> The motive behind these maneuvers is not difficult to discern: Strong showings by the opposition in state elections in Guerrero, Coahuila, and Mexico had raised fears that the PRI might lose its majority in the Chamber of Deputies in 1997. Equally worrisome, polls showed the PRI far behind in the critically important race for mayor of the Federal District (Mexico City).<sup>49</sup> A way had to be found to stack the deck.

All this, it may be noted, comes at a time when the "dinosaurs"--the old-line bosses who largely lost control of the party in the 1980s and early 1990s--are staging a comeback. A fierce power struggle is underway. At the PRI's 17th National Assembly in September, the Old Guard succeeded in pushing through rules that would require the party's next presidential nominee to have held elective office and been a party member for at least 10 years. Such a requirement would have prevented the last 5 presidents of Mexico from holding that office. The PRI deputies' subsequent decision to, in effect, throw out Zedillo's electoral law proposal and replace it with one of their own was only the most recent sign that the *politicos* are in the process of wresting back control of the party from Zedillo and the *tecnicos*. If they are successful, this will pose a major obstacle to political and economic reforms.

Things could get nasty. Electoral fraud and political violence are very real possibilities. Already, the PRI government has moved to suppress the activities and influence of foreign monitors and domestic critics. In January, the European Union was obliged to rescind a \$420,000 donation to a local human rights group to monitor the July federal and state elections. In the weeks that followed, the Mexico City offices of the National Action Party (PAN) and the Party of Democratic Revolution (PRD) were broken into and computer records stolen. Following disastrous election losses in the state of Morelos, the pressure was intensified. Pro-government legislators introduced a bill outlawing foreign financial support for independent electoral observers;<sup>50</sup> several foreign human rights activists were expelled

from the country; and a prominent political commentator was fired from a weekly radio show after he criticized President Zedillo.<sup>51</sup> Meanwhile, armed local supporters of the PRI, sometimes assisted by the police, continued to wage low-intensity war against government opponents in the countryside.<sup>52</sup>

As of May, it is not possible to confidently predict the outcome of elections for six governorships and the Chamber of Deputies. The polls suggest a wide-open battle. (The Senate is another matter. Only a third of the seats are up for election; the PRI will retain control.) The most recent surveys, however, indicate that the PRD's Cuauhtemoc Cardenas has a substantial lead in the race for mayor of the Federal District.<sup>53</sup> In the Chamber of Deputies, in contrast, the PRI will probably come away with a plurality of the seats and could very well win a majority. (It could win an absolute majority with as little as 42 percent of the vote.<sup>54</sup>) For his part, President Zedillo has abandoned all pretense of impartiality and is actively campaigning for his party.<sup>55</sup> Surveys indicate that his popularity has risen sharply as the economy has improved, and that people are beginning to feel somewhat better about the economic situation.<sup>56</sup> This will probably improve the PRI's chances somewhat.

In sum, while the opposition will undoubtedly make major gains, in the short run, the PRI seems likely to weather the storm. The opposition is deeply divided between the conservative PAN and the center-left PRD, and the PRI should be able to exploit that. Even if it loses its majority in the Chamber of Deputies, it will probably continue to govern in an uneasy tacit alliance with the PAN. On the other hand, the new congress will certainly be more independent than its predecessor, since even many PRI candidates are critical of the Zedillo administration and its policies. This could make for considerable unruliness and unpredictability. Rather than imposing its will on the deputies, the administration will have to negotiate with them, and this may not always be easy.<sup>57</sup>

Meanwhile, at the local level the PAN and the PRD will continue to encounter major resistance in traditional bastions of PRI power, where *caciques* (political bosses) will sometimes rule in open defiance of Zedillo's attempts at democratization. Rather than a slow, steady spread of democracy, therefore, a more mottled pattern is likely, with opposition and reform elements holding sway in some areas, and PRI "dinosaurs" retaining control in others.

And so the political struggle will continue. The next "big" election will be in 2000, when the presidency itself will be at stake. By then, one suspects, the PAN may have a more formidable candidate than it has ever had before. I believe Vicente Fox, the charismatic governor of Guanajuato, will run.<sup>58</sup> Moreover, if Cardenas becomes mayor of the Federal District as expected, he will undoubtedly use that position--the second most powerful political post in the country--as a counterpoint to Zedillo's



presidency and a launching pad for his own presidential candidacy in 2000. Thus, it is entirely possible that the opposition will have two formidable candidates in that race.

The PRI, of course, is highly skilled in the art of divide and conquer. Even so, the most critical factor in the next presidential campaign will likely be the state of the economy. If it is in good shape, the PRI candidate will probably win. If it is not, however, the party will be in even deeper trouble than it is today. If Vicente Fox or another opposition candidate were to win, that would again raise the issue of whether the PRI is willing to turn over power. In the past, it has sometimes resorted to massive fraud to salvage victories that could not be won by legitimate means. If election 2000 turned out to be a repeat of 1988, there could be serious violence.<sup>59</sup>

But 2000 is a long way off. Anything can happen in 3 years. Mexico is heading into uncharted waters, and about the only thing that can be said with confidence is that there will be more turmoil. The glue that for so many decades held together the numerous fiefdoms constituting the Mexican political elite has disintegrated, leaving these factions locked in a fierce struggle for power and spoils. The presidency, long a key to holding together the ruling coalition, has lost much of its legitimacy and ability to mediate conflicts and impose solutions. At the same time, the growing strength of the opposition both within and outside the PRI raises the possibility of political immobilism and instability. While the worst-case scenario--ungovernability--seems unlikely, at minimum one should expect more scandals and violence. All this will make for continuing Mexican national insecurity.

#### **The United States and the Revolution in Mexican Military Affairs: Pitfalls and Prospects.<sup>60</sup>**

The past 2 years have witnessed major changes in the U.S.-Mexican military relationship. Granted, things have not always gone smoothly. The Mexicans have long memories. They have never forgotten that a good part of the U.S. southwest was once Mexican territory, and that the United States has intervened on other occasions as well. As a result of these experiences and the enormous imbalances in military, economic and political power between the two countries, Mexicans developed a deep sense of insecurity vis-a-vis the "Colossus of the North." They have traditionally been wary of getting too close for fear of losing their sovereignty or becoming an economic vassal. Until the 1980s, their military manuals portrayed the United States as Mexico's natural enemy, and there is still a National Museum of Invasions in Mexico City where children can learn about the sad history of their country's relations with the gringos. And while the decision to join the United States and Canada in the North American Free Trade Agreement has broken down many of these inhibitions, there continues to be a lingering sensitivity in the



Mexican psyche.

All this contributed to the furor in the Mexican press in March 1996 when it was learned that U.S. Secretary of Defense William Perry had told reporters that the two countries were considering conducting combined military exercises. Mexican officials fell over one another rushing to assure the public that U.S. soldiers would not be allowed to engage in maneuvers on Mexican soil. Yet, Perry had never suggested sending troops to Mexico. He was talking about combined naval exercises, and had simply listed this as one among a number of programs that could be undertaken to build goodwill. But though the Mexicans had overreacted, the damage was done. Mexico halted scheduled combined naval operations with the United States. In spite of a large increase in drug shipments off the Pacific Coast, those exercises have still not been conducted.<sup>61</sup>

Notwithstanding that episode, however, U.S.-Mexican relations have been changing fast. In October 1995, Perry made the first ever official visit to Mexico by a U.S. Secretary of Defense, and the following April his Mexican counterpart, General Enrique Cervantes Aguirre, returned the honor. On the latter occasion, the two men signed an agreement for the transfer of 20 UH1H "Huey" helicopters to the Mexican Air Force, with up to 53 others to be delivered in 1997. In addition, the accord provided for the training of Mexican soldiers in counternarcotics tactics, as well as the training of helicopter pilots and mechanics, at various American military bases.<sup>62</sup> This was the largest agreement of its kind ever concluded between the two countries. Previously, helicopters had been provided to the Mexican antinarcotics police rather than to the armed forces. In October 1996, it was reported that altogether 73 copters and four surveillance planes, worth \$50 million, would be donated.<sup>63</sup>

Meanwhile, Mexico City and Washington were engaged in increasingly wide-ranging talks on combined counter-narcotics operations. In March 1996, Presidents Clinton and Zedillo established a High Level Contact Group on Drug Control to address the threat drugs posed to both countries. Later that month, at the first meeting, a 10-point communique was issued, calling for the development of a joint antinarcotics strategy and increased cooperation, along with the implementation of laws to criminalize the laundering of drug profits. Since then, other meetings of the Contact Group have been held, and the Mexican Congress has enacted money-laundering and organized crime laws to facilitate the war against trafficking.<sup>64</sup>

Keep in mind that these developments have been occurring at a time when the Mexican military has been assuming new policing functions, including drug interdiction, and when it is increasingly involved in counterinsurgency operations in over a half-dozen states. Half the Army has been mobilized for the struggle against the EPR and the Zapatistas; in the process, vast areas of central and southern Mexico have been militarized.

Furthermore, it is a time when the armed forces are rapidly growing in manpower, arms, budget, and political influence. Since 1994, troop strength has increased by some 15 percent to about 180,000, and will reportedly reach 210,000 by early next century. In 1995 alone, military spending may have increased by as much as 44 percent, and it has continued to rise ever since. (Even this does not tell the whole story, however. Off-budget bonuses controlled by the president may add up to a billion dollars more to the armed forces' coffers.) Over the past 3 years, the military has purchased 70 combat helicopters, 70 AMX-13 tanks, 14 training aircraft, and more than a thousand armored vehicles.<sup>65</sup> At the same time, President Zedillo has continued his predecessor's practice of including the Ministers of Defense and Navy in a National Security Cabinet, along with the Ministers of Justice, Interior and Foreign Affairs.<sup>66</sup>

In short, the Zedillo administration has made the generals an offer they cannot resist. They cannot say no. Some, indeed, are plunging into their new jobs with great enthusiasm, sensing no doubt a golden opportunity for themselves as well as their institution.

So the military is out of the barracks. Its roles and missions are expanding, and it is becoming much more involved in the policy process. Yet, not surprisingly, all this is making some observers uneasy. Moreover, some of the people who are most uncomfortable are in the armed forces. Military leaders have always been reluctant to become too deeply involved in counternarcotics operations for fear that this will make the institution more susceptible to corruption. While the services have long been involved in crop eradication, policing and interdiction are more dangerous activities. The military has traditionally been very protective of its prestige. In general, it has enjoyed a much better image than other governmental and political institutions, and it does not want to lose that public support--which could very well happen if it is increasingly penetrated by the narco-traffickers.

And make no mistake about it, such penetration will occur. The notion that the military is somehow invulnerable to drug corruption is a myth. The case of General Jesus Gutierrez Rebollo (to be discussed presently) provides only the most recent evidence. Until February, when he was arrested for being on the payroll of Amado Carrillo Fuentes' Juarez Cartel, Gutierrez headed the National Institute for the Control of Drugs. A few years ago, another general was relieved of his command after being accused of protecting Colombian drug flights. In yet another incident, in 1991, two generals and three other officers were detained and imprisoned after soldiers refueling a cocaine-laden airplane shot and killed seven narcotics agents who had been trying to capture the craft. Since the arrest of Gutierrez, moreover, several other generals have been accused of collaborating with the Juarez and Tijuana cartels.<sup>67</sup>

In short, if the military has been less susceptible to narco-penetration than the police, it is in part because it has constituted less of a threat to the cartels. That, however, is changing fast, and one must expect that the narcos will step up their efforts to subvert the institution. Most military officers are poorly paid, and this leaves them vulnerable to bribery. According to one U.S. estimate, Mexican traffickers spend as much as 60 percent of their estimated \$10 billion in annual profits to suborn government officials at all levels.<sup>68</sup> Military and law enforcement agencies simply cannot compete with this.

Then, too, there are other sources of reluctance. Some officers worry that getting more deeply involved in policing and counternarcotics will adversely affect the military's ability to perform its traditional missions. In addition, many dislike this kind of work. They are not trained for it and tend to look down on it. Still others are concerned that these new duties will embroil them in violence they would rather avoid. Even so, it is difficult to say no when your budget and troop strength are growing, and you are being given all sorts of new toys to play with.

Another concern, particularly within the human rights community, is that as the military becomes increasingly involved in police, counternarcotics and counterinsurgency operations, human rights violations will increase. Again, there is a myth that the Mexican military is different from other Latin American militaries--that it is somehow immune from the abuses that have characterized other armed forces in the region. While it is true that the Mexicans have not engaged in the kinds of massive violations committed by their colleagues in Guatemala, El Salvador, Colombia, Peru, and elsewhere, their record is far from impeccable. Serious abuses, including executions, were committed during the fighting in Chiapas, for which no one so far has been prosecuted. Allegations of human rights violations have risen again in recent months, especially in Guerrero and Oaxaca, where the military has launched operations against the EPR guerrillas, and Chiapas, where the army, police, and paramilitary groups have stepped up the pressure on the Zapatistas.<sup>69</sup> In the wake of the Gutierrez Rebollo affair, moreover, evidence has arisen of military involvement in kidnappings and disappearances related to the war against drugs.<sup>70</sup>

Counterinsurgency and human rights issues will be an ongoing concern for the United States and could potentially become a source of embarrassment and friction. The Clinton administration and Congress have provided the Mexican Government with \$37 million in military aid in 1997, and some of this is reportedly being used against the Zapatistas and the EPR.<sup>71</sup> Moreover, what would happen if U.S. military equipment donated for counternarcotics purposes were diverted to fighting guerrillas? Or if U.S. arms were used to suppress legitimate political movements? There would likely be a hue and cry in both

countries.<sup>72</sup>

Beyond the issue of counterinsurgency, moreover, the growing involvement of the military in the public security realm cannot but lead to apprehension that the armed forces, like the police, will engage in excessive violence. Indeed, a certain amount of this is probably inevitable. Soldiers are human beings; they make mistakes. Some are prone to violence by temperament or conditioning, and such tendencies can easily come out in tension-ridden, dangerous circumstances. At the same time, military personnel receive a different kind of training and come from a very different professional culture than police. The latter tend to be more sensitive to community concerns (since they often live there) and are conditioned to meet threats with the minimum amount of force necessary to control the situation. In contrast, soldiers are warriors. As the saying goes, they are trained to kill people and break things. They are normally isolated from the community, and may be more prone to viewing it as occupied territory than a neighborhood.

One should not overstate these differences. The Mexican police tend to be a predatory bunch. The real question is how much military violence will occur, and whether there will be mechanisms of accountability sufficient to preserve justice and prevent abuses from getting out of hand. To date, the evidence is not encouraging. The military continues to be unresponsive to human rights charges. (Since 1993, General Jose Francisco Gallardo Rodriguez has been imprisoned for the "crime" of having proposed the appointment of an ombudsman to root out military corruption and human rights violations.)<sup>73</sup> There is also a concern that the weakening of due process protection that has occurred as part of the Zedillo administration's efforts to combat organized crime may result in the military being drawn into political conflicts and used to suppress the government's opponents.<sup>74</sup>

In short, there is a danger that the United States might be increasingly drawn, wittingly or otherwise, into Mexico's domestic affairs, even to the point of taking sides--or being perceived to take sides--in the country's evolving political conflicts. This can get very sticky, and it needs to be given more thought.

A few final words about the growing militarization of Mexican society and the increasing politicization of the military. For over half a century, the Mexican armed forces have avoided meddling in political affairs. They accept the principle of subordination to civilian authority; they do not launch *golpes de estado*. This being said, however, it would be a mistake to take them for granted. Major changes are occurring in Mexican society and in the military's role within it. Changes in roles and circumstances could very well lead to new forms of behavior. Let there be no question about it, this is a highly secretive, authoritarian institution. While it is easy to bring it into the

political arena, it may be much harder to get it out.

This does not mean that a *coup* is just around the corner. The likelihood that the military might overthrow the government still seems fairly remote. Given the Latin American tradition, however, it is not unthinkable. Recent years have witnessed growing military discontent with the country's civilian leadership.<sup>75</sup> If Mexico were to descend into chaos, the armed forces might feel duty bound to intervene in order to "save the nation." More likely, in the case of a weakened presidency, they might become the power behind the throne. And that, in turn, could lead to an increasingly partisan involvement. If the government brought the military into the political arena and then found itself seriously challenged by the political opposition, the generals would have to decide whom to support. If they were indebted to the regime, that might shift them away from the more neutral stance the institution has adopted in recent years.<sup>76</sup>

Along these same lines, there is also a possibility that the military could splinter and plunge into factional strife. Political fissures within the institution are growing. In January, for instance, 11 high-ranking retired military officers (including 3 brigadier generals, an admiral and 3 vice-admirals) announced their affiliation with the Party of Democratic Revolution. Their defection led General Ramon Mota Sanchez, a former PRI federal deputy (currently, there are 3 generals serving as PRI deputies), to denounce them. In turn, retired BG Gustavo Antonio Landeros responded: "I am not a traitor to the military. I'm a traitor to intimidation and abuse." He claimed that the military was tired of being used to "cover up" the inability of the government to deal with the country's social problems. At the same time, BG Samuel Lara decried the privatization and sale of former state enterprises to transnational corporations and the loss of national sovereignty in the name of neoliberal economic policies.<sup>77</sup>

Nor is this discontent restricted to general officers. There is considerable unhappiness in the mid-level officer corps with the way the country is being run. A lot of lieutenant colonels are disgusted with the corruption and incompetence they see, both among civilians and within the military itself. They, no less than most Mexicans, are angry about the economic hardship that they and their families have suffered in recent years, and they are frustrated with a promotion system which, as they see it, is designed to weed out the best elements in their ranks and coopt the opportunists.

#### **The United States and Mexico: Between a Rock and a Hard Place.**

In February 1997, General Jesus Gutierrez Rebollo, the director of the National Institute to Combat Drugs, was arrested and forced to resign after it was learned that he had been on the payroll of Amado Carrillo Fuentes' Juarez Cartel. At an

unprecedented news conference, Defense Minister Cervantes announced that, for years, Gutierrez had received gifts, payments, and real estate from cartel leaders and provided protection for their cocaine shipments.<sup>78</sup> The general, it appeared, had been able to camouflage his ties to Carrillo Fuentes by launching operations against rival drug organizations even as he consolidated his relationship with Mexico's "Lord of the Skies." (A sobriquet Carrillo had won for pioneering the use of Boeing 727s to transport huge shipments of cocaine from Colombia to Mexico.)

This was a traumatic revelation. Since Gutierrez' appointment as Mexico's drug czar in December, U.S. authorities had embraced him without reservation. His North American counterpart, retired General Barry McCaffrey, had gone out of his way to praise him as "a serious soldier, a guy of absolute unquestioned integrity." Only a week before his arrest, Gutierrez had travelled to Washington, DC, where he had received a detailed briefing full of sensitive information on U.S. narcotics strategies, priorities, and operations. Even after discovering his criminal connections, the Mexican government had kept the Clinton administration in the dark for almost 2 weeks before finally announcing his removal. At that point, U.S. authorities found themselves having to scramble frantically to contain the damage.<sup>79</sup>

The problem went far beyond the serious intelligence failures that had occurred on both sides, and the operations and informants that might have been compromised. The Gutierrez affair triggered a massive crisis of confidence in the United States. Together with a crescendo of public allegations about the narco-connections of the Salinas family, two sitting state governors, and other public officials, the Gutierrez revelations left the devastating impression that the drug lords had so penetrated the Mexican state that efforts to cooperate with the Mexican government (on counternarcotics issues, at least) were futile. There was simply no way of telling the good guys from the bad. The Mexicans themselves apparently did not know, or did not want to know.

The truth was that U.S. authorities and President Zedillo had the same basic problem: They were both utterly clueless. For years, the United States had placed its faith in Carlos Salinas and the new technocratic generation, only to find out belatedly that the *tecnicos* were plagued by the same corruption and incompetence as the old guard *politicos*. By the same token, Zedillo, though personally honest, was dependent on those around him. He had trusted his advisers to find a prosecutor who would solve the sensational assassination cases that had plagued the country in recent years, and they had given him Pablo Chapa Bezanilla. (In December 1996, Chapa was dismissed after thoroughly bungling the Colosio and Ruiz Massieu murder cases. Subsequently, he went into hiding after being accused of planting evidence--a dead body--on one of Raul Salinas' ranches. In May,

he was arrested in Madrid.) The Gutierrez fiasco was merely the latest manifestation of the same disease. Whom could you trust?

This being said, the bottom line is that the United States and Mexico are trapped. Their geographic proximation and growing demographic, socio-economic, and political intermixture are such that they cannot escape one another. Consequently, they must learn to live together as best they can. For its part, Mexico finds itself between a rock and a hard place: It can bring the military into the law enforcement business, presumably on a temporary basis, until crime can be curbed and the police reformed. Or it can try to muddle through with the police and judicial structures it already has, while moving more gradually to purge them of incompetent, corrupt, and violent elements and build more professional institutions.

Neither is a particularly good option. The dangers of militarization are considerable. As Eric Olson has pointed out, "replacing one unaccountable institution (the police) with another that is equally impervious to public view, but significantly more powerful (the military)," could be a prescription for disaster.<sup>80</sup> Nor is there any guarantee that the armed forces will be more effective at combating crime than are the police. Indeed, militarization has already created new conflicts and morale problems within the law enforcement community, as police insecurity and resentment have grown under the spectre of displacement.<sup>81</sup>

On the other hand, criminal justice reform is an enormous task. It involves much more than just changing the police; there must be judicial reform also. Mexican circuit court magistrates estimate that the narcos have corrupted about 30 percent of the criminal court bench. This, along with widespread incompetence among public prosecutors, means that the vast majority of criminal cases against traffickers are flawed from the beginning.<sup>82</sup> Unless police reform is accompanied by a thoroughgoing judicial reform, justice will remain an illusion. Officers will continue to mete out their own forms of punishment in the back rooms of police stations or in the streets.

Moreover, it is not enough to simply abolish or purge corrupted institutions. Extensive training is necessary. (Police trainers generally agree that cadets require at least a year's training to develop professionalism.)<sup>83</sup> Even if the United States and the international community were willing to provide such assistance--and the kinds of aid Mexico would accept would probably be limited by nationalistic sensitivities--corruption is so deeply engrained that it would be very difficult to eradicate. The transformation of a political culture is never easy, and the task is made even more difficult by the magnitude of the problem and the scarcity of resources. It is one thing to undertake criminal justice reform in a tiny country like El Salvador or Haiti, quite another in a country of 100 million people. Unless Mexican officials are paid well enough so they can live decent



lives without resort to graft, any attempt at reform will be doomed. Yet, even if salaries can be substantially raised, there will always be those who will be tempted by opportunities for enrichment.

There are no easy solutions. Indeed, it is a measure of the intractable nature of the problem that Zedillo has opted for a strategy of militarization. This is, in effect, an act of desperation. Perhaps it will work. In the past, however, there has been a tendency to treat militarization as a *substitute* for serious police and judicial reform.<sup>84</sup> Unless that changes, militarization, with all its risks and costs, could become a permanent feature of the Mexican political landscape--or at least a chronic resort when civilian institutions fail.

### **Final Comments.**

The United States needs to take into account the above considerations in formulating its policy toward Mexico. In the past, Washington has all too often been willing to overlook unpleasant features of the Mexican political system--whether human rights violations, corruption, narcotrafficking, or a lack of democracy--when they were inconvenient to higher-priority goals such as the containment of communism or the promotion of NAFTA. Clearly, there is a danger in encouraging--or uncritically supporting--military solutions to Mexico's problems. As difficult as the task may be, the only strategy likely to offer long-term answers to Mexico's multiple crises is one which fosters the development of honest, competent, and responsible *civilian* institutions.

With this in mind, the United States should make a special effort to support criminal justice reform in Mexico. This means providing and encouraging other countries to provide large-scale, long-term aid to train civilian police and judicial personnel so that these institutions can be developed in a manner conducive to maintaining the rule of law. At the same time, Washington should encourage the Mexican government to gradually reverse its policy of militarization and recivilianize the police. While this cannot be done overnight, the process can be begun within the reasonably near future--providing sufficient resources and effort are put into police reform. Meanwhile, in private, the United States should speak out more forcefully on human rights abuses, narco-corruption and electoral irregularities when they occur. Good relations with the Mexican government should not be purchased at the expense of the Mexican people. Among other things, we should insist on adequate end-use monitoring of U.S. counternarcotics aid to make sure that it is not used for unintended purposes.

One other note seems in order. The United States has a tendency to blame others for problems that are in significant part its own making. It is easier to chastise Mexico for narcotrafficking than to solve the seemingly insatiable U.S.



appetite for drugs. Yet, without demand there would be no problem of supply. In a very real sense, the United States has been responsible for the destabilization of Mexico. Not wholly, of course; Mexicans must accept their share of the responsibility also. But the narco-pathology that is destroying their social and political fabric is merely following its natural source of attraction--the U.S. market. Indeed, by intensifying its counternarcotics efforts in the Caribbean in the 1980s and early 1990s, the United States pushed much of the drug traffic westward into Mexico. Subsequently, the North American Free Trade Agreement compounded the problem by vastly expanding the cross-border movement of vehicles, making interdiction more difficult and opening up new opportunities for smuggling (drugs and illegal immigrants northward, arms southward). A related consequence has been that the U.S. failure to curtail gunrunning to Mexico has assured that violence-prone groups have not lacked the means of carrying out their subversive activities.

What this implies in policy terms is that the United States must clean up its own house. Without a much more intense and sustained effort to curtail the U.S. domestic drug problem through prevention, treatment, and law enforcement programs, little of lasting consequence will be accomplished. Drug lords and cartels will come and go, but the basic problem will continue essentially unchanged.<sup>85</sup>

This is not the place for a detailed analysis of supply and demand strategies. It is important to note, however, that there is a growing consensus that treatment and education are the most cost-effective ways to reduce drug consumption. A 1994 RAND study, for instance, found that \$34 million invested in treatment reduces cocaine use as much as \$366 million invested in interdiction or \$783 million in source-country programs. This suggests rather strongly where U.S. priorities should lie.

The RAND report also concluded that treatment is 7.3 times more cost-effective than domestic law enforcement in reducing cocaine consumption.<sup>86</sup> Still, it is a bit much to expect the Mexicans to go after their cartels unless we are willing to do the same. For all the attention that has been paid to the Mexican traffickers by Congress and the press, little has been said about their U.S. counterparts. If the United States wants Mexico to more vigorously combat the cartels, it will have to do its share too. While we are at it, we should also adopt much stronger measures against arms trafficking.<sup>87</sup>

Beyond this, we must also understand that narcotrafficking will never be entirely eliminated. The drug war metaphor is misleading: This is not a military campaign, but rather a law enforcement, educational, and public health problem. As such, it is a permanent, not a temporary, condition. The issue is not about "winning" or "losing," but rather "reducing" and "containing." (Or, alternatively, allowing the situation to get completely out of control.) As long as we persist in thinking of

the problem in absolute terms, we will consign ourselves to frustration, demoralization, and "defeat."

Finally, there is the issue of how to deal with Mexico. A few months ago, the United States went through its annual rite of "certification." This year the decision was more difficult than previously because it came so close on the heels of the Gutierrez Rebollo affair. Nevertheless, the Clinton administration, after intense deliberation, chose to certify Mexico as a reliable ally in the campaign against drug trafficking.

In the judgement of this writer, that decision was a mistake. Not only is the veracity of the certification highly questionable, but it sends precisely the wrong message: The Mexicans are being told, in effect, that the United States is not all that serious about drug trafficking. Certification is merely a charade; Mexico has immunity. Consequently, the incentive to cooperate will be blunted since there are no penalties for noncooperation. The history of U.S.-Mexican counternarcotics relations is replete with cynicism, evasion, manipulation, and deceit, and certification will likely reinforce those tendencies.<sup>88</sup> Indeed, even as the Clinton administration was making its decision, Mexican authorities were withholding information that senior officials in the Attorney General's office had allowed Humberto Garcia Abrego, the Gulf of Mexico Cartel's chief money-launderer, to escape police custody. (That revelation was made only a few hours after U.S. officials proclaimed Mexico certified.<sup>89</sup>)

Again, there are no easy answers. The United States, too, is caught between a rock and a hard place. Full decertification, including the imposition of economic sanctions, would have produced an intense nationalistic backlash in Mexico, and made it much more difficult, if not impossible, for President Zedillo to cooperate on counternarcotics issues. It would have struck a telling body blow to Mexico's economic recovery, undermined the country's political stability, and done lasting damage to U.S.-Mexican relations, including trade, immigration, and environmental cooperation. This was not a decision to be made lightly or in the heat of anger.

The most obvious alternative would have been to decertify Mexico, but waive economic sanctions for national security reasons. Such a decision would have fully satisfied no one. Mexican nationalists would still have been outraged. But while the damage to U.S.-Mexican relations would have been considerable, the worst consequences of the other two options might have been either avoided or significantly lessened. And at least the right message would have been sent.

There is, however, a fourth option: Congress could abolish the certification process altogether. Put simply, the requirement has become more trouble than it is worth. In an era in which the United States is trying to promote broad hemispheric cooperation

with regard to trade, investment, counternarcotics, immigration, democratization, environmental protection, and other matters, certification is becoming a serious impediment to the promotion of U.S. interests. Latin Americans consider it offensive--a hypocritical attempt to publicly humiliate them and interfere in their domestic affairs. Again, the United States also has a problem with organized crime; we are not as free from sin as we pretend. The Latins see Washington politicizing the process, certifying some countries (Mexico) but not others (Colombia) for reasons that appear to have little to do with their respective performances. And they wonder, given the growing U.S. propensity to resort to such sanctions, who will be next.

In short, decertification has become counterproductive. It may well lead to less Latin American cooperation rather than more. It undermines our allies by increasing nationalistic pressures on them not to cooperate, even as it demoralizes them by publicly rejecting the efforts they do make, sometimes at considerable risk and cost to themselves. At the same time, the vigorous application of sanctions (which is, granted, unlikely) would damage legitimate businesses, hurt innocent people, and produce a bitter anti-U.S. backlash that could spread throughout the region. Under these circumstances, the United States would be best advised to be less heavy-handed. There are other, more effective ways to foster cooperation than mounting a soap box.

None of this should be taken to mean that the United States should not exercise political and economic pressure, when necessary, to promote its interests. On the contrary, Washington should be more aggressive in pressing the Mexican government on issues of democracy, human rights, corruption, and drug trafficking. But there are right ways and wrong ways to do this. One of the dangers is that current or future U.S. administrations will again lapse into silence out of fear that raising such issues will impede the attainment of higher priority objectives (e.g., trade and investment). Congress originally required certification, after all, because it felt the need to force a reluctant Executive's hand on these matters.

With regard to U.S.-Mexican military relations, a word of caution is advisable. There have already been significant improvements, and these can be built upon. But there is no pressing need for a major expansion of military-to-military contacts. The Mexicans are unlikely to accept the kinds of activities we would find most attractive--they will not allow the stationing of U.S. military units in the country, for instance--and there are risks and costs in pushing too hard. The uproar over Secretary Perry's remarks is a case in point. While we may well be able to increase cooperation in relatively noncontroversial areas (e.g., humanitarian operations, improved communications), this is fairly marginal stuff. Care will always have to be taken to package these activities in ways that will be acceptable to Mexico's politicians and public. Otherwise, further embarrassments will occur. As for military aid, it is extremely

important that materials delivered be used for the purposes intended. What we do not want, above all, is that U.S. weaponry become identified with political repression or human rights abuses.

As for U.S.-Mexican relations in general, I see rough times ahead. There is already a lot of frustration and anger on both sides of the border. While the United States and Mexico are closer today than they have ever been before, closeness does not necessarily translate into harmony. The major causes of strain in the relationship are deeply rooted and are not likely to disappear any time soon. Indeed, they may grow worse--in part precisely because of the growing interpenetration and interdependence of the two countries.

#### ENDNOTES

1. Cited in Douglas W. Payne, "Drugs and Dollars: A Global Challenge," *Freedom Review*, Vol. 27, No. 4, July-August 1996, p. 92.

2. Andres Oppenheimer, "Generals Expand Role in Mexico," *Miami Herald*, February 15, 1997.

3. On the shifting conception of U.S.-Mexican national security relations, see Sergio Aguayo Quezada and Bruce Bagley, eds., *En Busca de la Seguridad Perdida: Aproximaciones a la Seguridad Nacional Mexicana*, Mexico, D.F.: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1980; John Bailey and Sergio Aguayo Quezada, eds., *Strategy and Security in U.S.-Mexican Relations Beyond the Cold War*, San Diego: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, University of California, 1996. For reasons of space, this article will not attempt a comprehensive discussion of Mexican national security, but will limit itself to what I consider the most pressing issues.

4. Both President Ernesto Zedillo and his predecessor, Carlos Salinas, have designated drug trafficking as the greatest threat to Mexico's national security today. See, e.g., Zedillo's 1996 State of the Nation Address, in *Foreign Broadcast Information Service* (hereafter FBIS), *Daily Report: Latin America*, September 9, 1996. Also, Molly Moore and John Ward Anderson, "Drug Trade Called Greatest Threat to Mexico," *The Washington Post*, October 23, 1996. Not everyone, incidentally, accepts these proclamations at face value. Some observers believe this is just another instance of Mexican leaders telling the gringos what they want to hear. Moreover, Gabriel Marcella argues that the greatest threat to Mexican national security today is corruption, of which narcotrafficking is just one element. While not disagreeing with his premise, I prefer to take a more narrow focus. Corruption, in general, is such a huge problem as to be unmanageable in the limited space I have here.

5. According to the Mexican Interior Ministry's conservative

estimates, over 60 percent of the members of all police forces in the country have received bribes or have criminal records. Some officials estimate that more than 50 percent of Federal Judicial Police agents make money from drug traffickers, either through bribes or by keeping parts of confiscated cocaine shipments and selling them on the side. Andres Oppenheimer, *Bordering on Chaos*, Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1996, pp. 301-302.

6. Raul may not be the only member of the Salinas clan involved with narcotics traffickers. Allegations have been made against the Salinas brothers' father, Raul Salinas Lozano, and their former brother-in-law, the now deceased Jose Francisco Ruiz Massieu. In 1992, their cousin, Carlos Enrique Cervantes de Gortari, was convicted in a cocaine trafficking case. Whether these various claims can be verified remains to be seen. But see the court testimony presented in the Mario Ruiz Massieu case, in *FBIS, Daily Report: Latin America*, February 28, 1997; Sam Dillon with Christine Biederman, "Secretary to Mexican Patriarch Discloses Links to Drug Barons," *New York Times*, February 26, 1997; Molly Moore, "Drug Gang's Long Arm Grips Mexico," *The Washington Post*, February 2, 1997; John Ward Anderson and Molly Moore, "Salinas Kin Linked to Drug Figure," *Ibid.*, February 17, 1997; John Ward Anderson, "Swiss Link Raul Salinas to Mexican Drug Cash," *Ibid.*, April 4, 1997; John Ward Anderson, Molly Moore and Douglas Farah, "Official Role in Mexican Drugs Eyed," *Ibid.*, May 11, 1997; Sam Dillon and Craig Pyes, "Ties With Drug Traffickers Taint 2 Mexican Governors," *New York Times*, February 2, 1997. On narcopolitics in Mexico, see also Yolanda Figueroa, *El Capo del Golfo: Vida y Captura de Juan García Abrego*, Mexico: Editorial Grijalbo, 1996; Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, *The Drug Trade in Mexico and Implications for U.S.-Mexican Relations*, 104th Congress, 1st Session, August 8, 1995, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1995; Silvana Paternostro, "Mexico as a Narco-Democracy," *World Policy Journal*, Vol. 12, No. 1, Spring 1995, pp. 41-47. On the Federal Judicial Police, see Juan Sanchez Mendoza, "El Negro Historial de la Policia Judicial Federal," *Quehacer Politico*, No. 786, September 28, 1996, pp. 6-16.

7. The \$7 billion figure is from the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration. But the U.S. Treasury's Financial Crime Enforcement Network estimate is between \$10 and \$30 billion, and Mexican Assistant Attorney General Moises Moreno Hernandez put the total at about \$30 billion. See Molly Moore and John Ward Anderson, "Traffickers: Mexico's New Desperados," *The Washington Post*, April 28, 1996; Tim Golden, "Mexican Connection Grows as Cocaine Supplier to U.S.," *New York Times*, July 30, 1995.

8. Andrew Reding, "Certification a Polite Fiction--Neither Mexico Nor the U.S. Can Afford a Real Crackdown on Drugs," Pacific News Service, Internet, March 10, 1996. The figure for Mexican export earnings is from United Nations Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Preliminary Overview of the Economy of Latin America and the Caribbean*, 1996, Santiago,

Chile: United Nations, 1996, p. 47.

9. Tim Golden, "U.S. Is Considering Curbs on Mexicans Tied to Narcotics," *New York Times*, April 27, 1997.

10. See Eric L. Olson, *The Evolving Role of Mexico's Military in Public Security and Antinarcotics Programs*, WOLA Briefing Series: Issues in International Drug Policy, Washington, DC: Washington Office on Latin America, May 1996.

11. Sam Dillon, "Mexico Drug Wars Advance Within Sight of U.S. Border," *New York Times*, October 10, 1996.

12. Hugo Martinez McNaught, "Tolera Mexico al Narco," *Reforma*, April 18, 1997; John Ward Anderson, "Soldiers Replace Federal Police in Drug-Wracked Mexican State," *The Washington Post*, February 22, 1997; Jesus Belmont Vasquez, "Las Pugnas del Narco y su Rastro Sangriento," *Epoca*, No. 278, September 30, 1996, pp. 28-30.

13. There is conflicting testimony as to exactly who alerted the killers. According to a gunman for the Tijuana cartel, the information came from inside the federal prosecutor's office. Another source, however, claims that the INCD (National Institute to Combat Drugs) commander at the Mexico City Airport was responsible. See Moore, "Drug Gang's Long Arm," *FBIS, Daily Report: Latin America*, March 17, 1997.

14. Molly Moore, "Mexico's Attorney General Fires 17% of Federal Police," *The Washington Post*, August 17, 1996; Moore, "Tijuana--Drug Traffickers' Hub," *Ibid.*, February 16, 1997; John Ward Anderson, "Soldiers Replace Federal Police in Drug-Wracked Mexican State," *Ibid.*, February 22, 1997; James Bennet, "Clinton and Mexico Chief Pledge Joint Effort on Border and Drugs," *New York Times*, May 7, 1997.

15. Subsequently, the requirements of combating a new guerrilla threat led the military to abandon the Chihuahua experiment. Most recently, however, Army personnel relieved all PJF commanders and agents in Ciudad Juarez, Camargo, Hidalgo del Parral, Ojinaga, and the state capital, Chihuahua. This even though the earlier program had been judged unsuccessful. *FBIS, Daily Report: Latin America*, February 25, 1997; information from a knowledgeable State Department source.

16. John Ross, "Mexico Barbaro, Cracks in the Mexican Military Wall as Army Goes Public," Part 1, February 3-17, 1997, No. 52, via Internet.

17. Jose Reveles, "Chihuahua, Punta de Lanza en la Militarizacion Antinarco," *El Financiero*, April 20, 1997; *FBIS, Daily Report: Latin America*, February 25, March 14, 20, and April 28, 1997; Olson, *The Evolving Role of Mexico's Military*, p. 5.

18. Following the arrest of General Jesus Gutierrez Rebollo, the INCD director, on drug charges in February 1997, the National Institute to Combat Drugs was purged and a civilian lawyer appointed head. But by this time the agency had become thoroughly penetrated by the cartels. Two months later, it was dissolved and replaced by a new organization, the Special Prosecutor's Office for Crimes Against Health. More on the Gutierrez Rebollo affair later.

19. *FBIS, Daily Report: Latin America*, January 7, 1997.

20. Especially the Navy. Information from Andres Oppenheimer of the *Miami Herald* and from a Mexican intelligence officer.

21. *FBIS, Daily Report: Latin America*, January 7, 1997; Washington Office on Latin America, "Talking Points on House Joint Resolution 58 Disapproving of the President's Decision to Certify Mexico"; Sam Dillon, "In Shake-up, Army Officers Fill Top Police Posts in Mexico City," *New York Times*, June 19, 1996; John Ward Anderson, "Scandal Exposes Mexican Military's Corruptibility," *The Washington Post*, February 20, 1997; Ross, "Mexico Barbaro."

22. Oppenheimer, *Bordering on Chaos*, p. 301. See also Sam Dillon, "Abductions Rock Mexico, Scaring Not Just the Rich," *New York Times*, November 1, 1996; "MEXICO: Business Wants Tougher Action," *Latin American Weekly Report*, April 29, 1997.

23. U.S. Department of State, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, March 1996, p. 141; *Ibid.*, March 1997, p. 145.

24. John Ward Anderson and Molly Moore, "Mexico's Cartels Diversify," *The Washington Post*, August 12, 1996.

25. Donald E. Schulz, *Mexico and the Future*, Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 1995, p. 19.

26. Denise Dresser, "Mexico: Uneasy, Uncertain, Unpredictable," *Current History*, 96, 607, February 1997, p. 53.

27. For background and a brief history of the movement, see Felipe Victoria Zepeda, *Detras de la Masacre: Aguas Blancas, Guerrero y la Guerrilla*, Mexico, D.F.: EDAMEX, 1996; the "Executive Summary" in *FBIS, Daily Report: Latin America*, September 4, 1996. See also, David Ronfeldt, John Arquilla, Graham Fuller and Melissa Fuller, *The Zapatista "Social Netwar" in Mexico*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, DRR-1547-A, December 1996, pp. 79-83 (draft); Matt Moffett, Craig Torres and Dianne Solis, "Brutal Rebel Group in Mexico Leaves Trail of Death, Uncertainty," *Wall Street Journal*, September 3, 1996; Sam Dillon, "Mexico Builds a Picture of a Fanatic Rebel Group," *New York Times*, September 5, 1996; Andres Oppenheimer, "Mexican

Revolutionary May Have Called Rebels' Shots From Jail," *Miami Herald*, September 8, 1996.

28. Dillon, "Mexico Builds a Picture"; "Executive Summary."

29. See, e.g., "Proceso's report on the EPR's 'Basic War Course'," in *FBIS, Daily Report: Latin America*, September 11, 1996.

30. The evidence here is mixed. Jorge Castaneda has reported that undisclosed government sources are claiming that the EPR has executed 50 members of the armed forces in recent months, some in gruesome circumstances. "After the Bailout, A Flood," *The Washington Post*, March 2, 1997. On the other hand, see Julia Preston, "With Nonviolent Sallies, Rebels in Mexico Fight On," *New York Times*, February 13, 1997. I am skeptical of the Castaneda report.

31. Ronfeldt et al., *The Zapatista "Social Netwar" in Mexico*, p. 80; information from Eric Olson of the Washington Office on Latin America; John Ward Anderson, "New Rebel Attacks Coincide With Mexican Election Drive," *The Washington Post*, May 29, 1997.

32. The most recent groups to appear are the Independent Revolutionary Army and the Armed Front for the Liberation of the Neglected Peoples of Guerrero. It remains to be seen whether they have any capabilities.

33. See, e.g., "MEXICO: Business Wants Tougher Action"; Molly Moore, "Mexico's War on Rebels Gives Rural Towns the Jitters," *The Washington Post*, October 16, 1996; Julia Preston, "Mexico Confronts Rebels With Limited Crackdown," *New York Times*, October 16, 1996; Human Rights Watch/Americas, *The New Year's Rebellion: Violations of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law during the Armed Revolt in Chiapas, Mexico*, Vol. 6, No. 3, March 1, 1994; Physicians for Human Rights and Human Rights Watch/Americas, *Waiting for Justice in Chiapas*, December 1994.

34. See, e.g., Donald E. Schulz, "Ten Theories in Search of Central American Reality," in *Revolution and Counterrevolution in Central America and the Caribbean*, Donald E. Schulz and Douglas H. Graham, eds., Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984, pp. 27-35. See also the chapters by Gordon Bowen on Guatemala and by Schulz on El Salvador.

35. See, e.g., *FBIS, Daily Report: Latin America*, September 4, 1996.

36. John Ward Anderson, "As Peso Slips, Mexicans Fear a Repeat of 1994's Economic Crisis," *The Washington Post*, November 2, 1996.

37. First-quarter economic growth for 1997 was 5.1 percent.



ECLAC, *Preliminary Overview*, p. 37; "Mexican Output Rises 7.4%, Eclipsing Economic Forecasts," *New York Times*, November 22, 1996. Julia Preston, "Elections Near, Mexican Money Supply Grows," *Ibid.*, May 29, 1997.

38. Jorge Castaneda, "Mexico: The Politics and Economy of Today and Tomorrow," lecture delivered at the Symposium on "Mexico: Today and Tomorrow," Dickinson College, Carlisle, PA, April 10, 1997; Castaneda, "After the Bailout, the Flood"; *FBIS, Daily Report: Latin America*, February 19, 1997.

39. Granted, the crisis had deeper causes. See, e.g., Donald E. Schulz, *Mexico in Crisis*, Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 1995, pp. 40-42; Schulz, *Mexico and the Future*, pp. 9-14.

40. The Mexican economy's extreme fragility was even admitted by the Clinton administration during the congressional debate over certification, when officials testified that the mere act of decertification--even if it were not accompanied by sanctions--would be enough to frighten away investors and endanger economic stability. See Adam Clymer, "Congress Seeking Ways to Reproach Mexico Over Drugs," *New York Times*, March 13, 1997.

41. See, e.g., David Lipschultz, "U.S. Rates Could Hurt Mexico," *El Financiero*, International Edition, May 5-11, 1997.

42. This appears to have been largely a product of the Mexican Government's decision not to privatize state-owned petrochemical plants, together with profit-taking and uncertainty about U.S. policy after the November elections.

43. *FBIS, Daily Report: Latin America*, February 19, 1997; Anderson, "As Peso Slips"; Brayton Wood, "Peso to Stay Firm Through July Election?," *Guadalajara Reporter*, Vol. 34, No. 15, April 12-18, pp. 1, 16.

44. This being said, the Bank has in fact occasionally intervened in order to prop up the peso and avoid a devaluation. See, e.g., *FBIS, Daily Report: Latin America*, February 19, 1997.

45. Information from Isaac Cohen of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. See also *FBIS, Daily Report: Latin America*, February 19 and 25, 1997. On the other hand, MIT economic guru Rudi Dornbush, whose analyses anticipated the 1994 economic crisis, no longer insists that the currency is overvalued, and he is not alone.

46. See, e.g., *El Economista*, February 3, 1997.

47. Castaneda, "After the Bailout, a Flood."

48. Of the 2.446 billion pesos to be distributed among the

parties competing in the July 1997 federal and state elections, the PRI will receive 1.6 billion. Its most serious competitors, the National Action Party (PAN) and the Party of Democratic Revolution (PRD), are supposed to receive 609 million pesos and 460 million pesos, respectively, with the rest to be dispersed among 5 minor parties. But the PAN has already announced its intention to return part of the public funding it received. *FBIS, Daily Report: Latin America*, January 29, 1997.

49. A January 24-28 poll conducted by the Indemerc Louis Harris organization, for instance, showed capital residents preferring the National Action Party by 36 percent to the Party of Democratic Revolution's 24 percent and the PRI's 14 percent. *Ibid.*, February 10, 1997. See also John Ward Anderson and Molly Moore, "Ruling Party Down, Not Out, in Mexico," *The Washington Post*, January 19, 1997.

50. At this writing, the bill has been temporarily pigeonholed due to the protests it generated.

51. *FBIS, Daily Report: Latin America*, February 3, March 28 and April 2, 1997; Sam Dillon, "As Vote Nears, Mexican Party Muzzles Foes," *New York Times*, April 30, 1997.

52. See, e.g., *FBIS, Daily Report: Latin America*, April 2, 3 and 10, 1997; especially Human Rights Watch, *Implausible Deniability: State Responsibility for Rural Violence in Mexico*, April 1997.

53. The latest *Reforma* poll gives Cardenas an 11-point lead over the PAN's Carlos Castillo Peraza, and a 15-point lead over the PRI's Alfredo del Mazo. But other polls have it much closer. *FBIS, Daily Report: Latin America*, May 7 and 8, 1997.

54. The governability clause allows for an over-representation of seats for the party winning a plurality. *Ibid.*, April 14, 1997.

55. *Ibid.*, April 21, 1997.

56. As of March 1997, Zedillo's approval rating stood at 54 percent, in contrast to a low of 30 percent in December 1995. Seventeen percent of the respondents said the economic situation had improved over a year ago. This compared to only 2 percent in December 1995. From a nationwide poll of 1,550 respondents conducted by *La Reforma* and *El Norte*. *FBIS, Daily Report: Latin America*, March 27, 1997.

57. See *Ibid.*, April 28, 1997.

58. On Vicente Fox, see especially Andrew Reding, "The Next Mexican Revolution," *World Policy Journal*, Vol. 13, No. 3, Fall 1996, pp. 61-70.

59. Many Mexicans believe that Cuauhtemoc Cardenas defeated Carlos Salinas in the 1988 presidential election. Though this cannot be proven, there is no question that there was widespread fraud. (See Schulz, *Mexico in Crisis*, p. 6.)

60. On the Mexican military and civil-military relations, see especially Roderic Ai Camp, *Generals in the Palacio: The Military in Modern Mexico*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1992; Martin Edwin Andersen, "Civil-Military Relations and Internal Security in Mexico: The Undone Reform," in *The Challenge of Institutional Reform in Mexico*, Riordan Roett, ed., Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995, pp. 155-180; Monica Serrano, "The Armed Branch of the State: Civil-Military Relations in Mexico," *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Vol. 27, Part 2, May 1995, pp. 423-448; Stephen J. Wager and Donald E. Schulz, "The Zapatista Revolt and Its Implications for Civil-Military Relations and the Future of Mexico," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, Vol. 37, No. 1, Spring 1995, pp. 1-42; Wager, "The Mexican Military Approaches the 21st Century: Coping with a New World Order," in *Mexico Faces the 21st Century*, Donald E. Schulz and Edward J. Williams, eds., Westport, CT: Praeger, 1995, pp. 59-76.

61. *FBIS, Daily Report: Latin America*, March 27, 1996; Mary Beth Sheridan, "Proposal for Joint Exercises Spurs Uproar in Mexico," *Los Angeles Times* (Washington edition), March 19, 1996; Molly Moore, "Latin Drugs Flow North Via Pacific," *The Washington Post*, January 30, 1997.

62. In early April, counternarcotics training had already begun for 15 Mexican military officers at Fort Benning. This was to be the first step in a three-step program that would subsequently take them to Fort Bragg and Fort Campbell. Currently, there are about 200 Mexican officers training in various programs. Conversation with LTC Bill Cardenas; Clint Claybrook, "Mexican Officers Train at Benning School to Fight Drugs," *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer* (Georgia), April 2, 1996.

63. Sam Dillon, "Mexico Quietly Makes Big Shifts Toward a More Pro-U.S. Policy," *New York Times*, May 2, 1996; "Army Reportedly Will Get U.S. Coverters To Aid Drug War," *Chicago Tribune*, October 20, 1996.

64. U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO), *Drug Control: Counter-narcotics Efforts in Mexico*, GAO/NSIAD-96-163, June 1996, p. 19.

65. Andres Oppenheimer, "Generals Expand Role in Mexico," *Miami Herald*, February 15, 1997; Ross, "Mexico Barbaro"; Julia Preston, "Mexico's Army Out of the Barracks," *New York Times*, September 14, 1996.

66. LTC Antonio Solorzano, *Mexico y el Narcotrafico*, Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, Strategy Research Project, 1997, p. 11; Erubiel Tirado Cervantes, *The Mexican*

*Military and the "Modernization" Process (1988-1994)*, unpublished dissertation, university unidentified, September 1994, p. 20.

67. And there have been other cases as well. Back in the 1980s, a Minister of Defense, General Juan Arevalo Gardoqui, helped protect Rafael Caro Quintero's marijuana farms. Elaine Shannon, *Desperados: Latin Drug Lords, U.S. Lawmen, and the War America Can't Win*, New York: Viking, 1988, pp. 291-292; Wager, "The Mexican Military Approaches the 21st Century," pp. 65-66; "MEXICO: Another General in Cartel's Pay," *Latin American Weekly Report*, March 25, 1997; Sam Dillon, "Court Files Say Drug Baron Used Mexican Military," *New York Times*, May 24, 1997.

68. Dillon and Pyes, "Ties With Drug Traffickers Taint 2 Mexican Governors."

69. A recent report by the Mexican Commission for the Defense and Promotion of Human Rights for the period November 1996 to February 1997 found 178 cases of human rights abuse. In the 102 cases where responsibility could be identified, the military was most frequently involved (32), followed by State Judicial Police (14) and the Secretariat of Public Security (13). In the state of Guerrero alone, during the first two months of this year, the press implicated the military in 20 of the 28 cases of human rights violations. Testimony of George R. Vickers, Executive Director, Washington Office on Latin America, "Mexico and U.S. International Drug Policy," Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere and Peace Corps Affairs, March 12, 1997, p. 2. See also "MEXICO: Church and Congress Warn on Chiapas," *Latin American Weekly Report*, April 22, 1997; Julia Preston, "Out of Spotlight, Violence Tears at Mexican State," *New York Times*, May 23, 1997; Ross, "Mexico Barbaro"; Andrew Reding, *Mexico: Democracy and Human Rights*, Perspective Series, Washington, DC: Immigration and Naturalization Service, U.S. Department of Justice, July 1995, especially pp. 31-34. This is not to mention, of course, earlier human rights abuses--e.g., during the counterinsurgency operations in Guerrero in the 1970s, and the suppression of student protesters at Tlatelolco in 1968.

70. Julia Preston, "Drugs Connect Mexico Leaders to Abductions," *New York Times*, March 9, 1997.

71. John Ross, "Mexico Up in Arms," *The Nation*, May 19, 1997, p. 6.

72. Several U.S.-leased counternarcotics helicopters were in fact diverted in Chiapas. GAO, *Drug Control: Counternarcotics Efforts in Mexico*, p. 15.

73. Gallardo was charged with a variety of offences, but to date Mexican courts have not found him guilty of anything. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights has called on President Zedillo to release him, but without effect.

74. See, e.g., Olson, "The Evolving Role of Mexico's Military," p. 4.

75. Some officers, for instance, felt that President Salinas tried to make them scapegoats for the alleged intelligence failures that preceded the Zapatista uprising. (In fact, the intelligence was there. For political reasons, Salinas just chose to ignore it.) Similarly, many officers were unhappy with both Salinas' and Zedillo's military policies in Chiapas. Many were also unhappy with the latter's attempt, when he was Minister of Education, to produce new textbooks which revealed the military's role in suppressing the 1968 student demonstrations. In general, the military does not like to be placed in a position where it looks bad. See Wager and Schulz, "The Zapatista Revolt," pp. 14-21, 27, 34-35.

76. It is one thing to acknowledge the "sole and supreme command of the nation through the president of the republic," as General Cervantes recently did. But what do you do if the president commands you to suppress the opposition in the name of national security? *FBIS, Daily Report: Latin America*, February 20, 1997.

77. Ross, "Mexico Barbaro."

78. *FBIS, Daily Report: Latin America*, February 21 and March 11, 1997.

79. Julia Preston, "A General in Mexico's Drug War Is Dismissed on Narcotics Charges," *New York Times*, February 19, 1997; Preston, "Mexico's Jailed Anti-Drug Chief Had Complete Briefings in U.S.," *Ibid.*, February 20, 1997; Pierre Thomas, "U.S. Assesses Damage Caused by Mexican Drug Official," *The Washington Post*, February 20, 1997.

80. Eric Olson, "Mexico's Drug-fighting Plan Questionable," *Miami Herald*, February 28, 1997.

81. In early May, this led to violent demonstrations in Mexico City, as hundreds of police protesting militarization squared off against antiriot forces.

82. *FBIS, Daily Report: Latin America*, April 18, 1997.

83. Human Rights Watch/Americas, the National Coalition for Haitian Rights, and the Washington Office on Latin America, "The Human Rights Record of the Haitian National Police," January 1997, p. 31.

84. In the words of one human rights group, the Salinas government's efforts to militarize Mexico's counternarcotics program were "in large measure, a result of [its] inability or unwillingness to pursue serious reform of the police." Minnesota

Advocates for Human Rights, *Civilians at Risk: Military and Police Abuses in the Mexican Countryside*, Minneapolis, 1993.

85. See, e.g., Mathea Falco, "U.S. Drug Policy: Addicted to Failure," *Foreign Policy*, No. 102, Spring 1996, pp. 120-134; and Peter Andreas, "U.S.-Mexico: Open Markets, Closed Borders," *Ibid.*, No. 103, Summer 1996, pp. 51-63.

86. C. Peter Rydell and Susan S. Everingham, *Controlling Cocaine: Supply Versus Demand Programs*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, MR-331-ONDCP/A/DPRC, 1994, p. xiii.

87. On the arms trafficking problem, see the joint U.S.-Mexican government publication, *U.S./Mexico Bi-national Drug Threat Assessment*, May 1997, pp. 89-94.

88. For the time being, Congress has given Mexico a conditional certification. But barring some unforeseen disaster, no one seriously believes that it will withhold final certification regardless of whether or not its conditions are met. This was just its way of finessing a sticky situation. For a detailed account of the aforementioned cynicism, evasion, manipulation, and deceit, see Shannon, *Desperados*, *passim*.

89. Similarly, the new Special Prosecutor's Office for Crimes Against Health, which was recently created to replace the thoroughly corrupted National Institute to Combat Drugs, will be headed by the same director as its predecessor and will even occupy the same headquarters. Even more disturbing, many of its agents are to be drawn from the ranks of the old agency (plus, of course, the military). This announcement was made just 5 days before President Clinton's May visit to Mexico. It is difficult to take it seriously. In the words of one observer, "this is more to satisfy political pressure from the United States than to fight organized crime." Molly Moore and John Ward Anderson, "Mexico Scraps Corrupted Drug Agency," *The Washington Post*, May 1, 1997; Moore, "Officials, Not Judge, Freed Drug Suspect," *Ibid.*, March 2, 1997.